

Received July 4, 1766.

**XXXVII. Description of two Parthian Coins,
never hitherto published. By the Rev. John
Swinton, B. D. F. R. S. Member of the
Academy degli Apatisti at Florence, and
of the Etruscan Academy of Cortona in
Tuscany, in a Letter to Charles Morton,
M. D. Sec. R. S.**

Dear Sir,

Read Dec. 18, 1766. **T**O W A R D S the close of last month,
a few days after my visit to you at
Montague-House, I met with two antient brass coins,
pretty well preserved, that had formerly had a place
assigned them in the valuable collection brought by
the Right Reverend Dr. Pococke, Lord Bishop of
Meath, out of the East. The workmanship of these
pieces seems considerably different from that both of
the Parthian coins, hitherto published, and those
struck by the Persian princes of the house of Saffan.
It somewhat, however, resembles that of the brass
medals of one or two of the later Parthian kings. As
I take them never to have appeared before in this part
of the world, and highly to merit the attention of the
curious; I shall beg leave, without any farther apolo-
gy, to transmit accurate draughts of them to the
Royal Society, together with a few cursory observations
upon them, which may, perhaps, prove not altogether
unacceptable

I



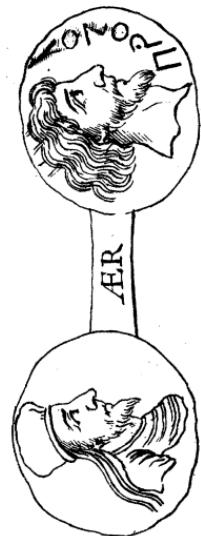
Philos. Transf. Vol. LVI. TAB.XV. p. 296.

Fig. 1.



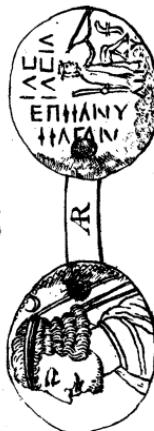
Apud Joannem Swinton, S.T.B. Oxoniens. R.S.S.

2.



Apud Joannem Swinton, S.T.B. Oxoniens. R.S.S.

3.



Apud Joannem Swinton, S.T.B. Oxoniens. R.S.S.

4.



Penes Joannem Swinton, S.T.B. Oxoniens. R.S.S.

unacceptable to that most illustrious and very learned body.

At first, from several slight circumstances, I attributed these coins to one of the Persian monarchs of the house of Saffan ; but examining them afterwards, with greater attention, I was rather inclined to believe, that they appertained to one of the latter Parthian kings. This, upon a farther inquiry, may perhaps appear probable, from the following considerations.

1. The workmanship of these pieces, however rude and inelegant, seems tolerably well to agree with that of several brass medals of the later Parthian kings ; whereas it almost totally differs from that of the coins generally assigned the Persian monarchs, posterior to those kings.

2. The tiara of the prince exhibited by the medals before me is somewhat similar to those handed down to us by two Parthian coins, attributed, by Dr. Vaillant, to Vologeses II. and Artabanus IV.

3. These medals may naturally enough be supposed to have first appeared in some neighbouring province, reduced by the Parthian arms, rather than in the interior part of Parthia itself ; which may possibly, in some measure at least, account for the rudeness and inelegance of taste they apparently present to our view.

4. The coins in question seem to have had some Greek characters originally impressed upon them. If this be admitted by the learned, those letters may possibly be thought to point at a Parthian mint. For we have scarce ever hitherto met with any Greek

characters on the medals (1) generally ascribed to the Saffanian kings.

5. The pieces under consideration here have likewise several unknown characters upon them, which can by no means be deemed the same with those preserved on the Persian coins struck by the princes of the house of Saffan.

These two medals are of the size of the smaller middle Roman brass, or nearly so. Their workmanship, as has been just remarked, is inelegant, or rather somewhat rude. They are so similar to each other, that they may be considered, without any great impropriety, as duplicates of the same medal. Both of them, on the anterior part, seem to have retained the effigies of the same Parthian king ; and, on the reverse, they both exhibit a human head, with the hair formed into curls, on which is just visible a rude sort of crown. Before the face of the latter, the Greek elements Π,Ρ,Ο,Ζ,Ο,Τ, or ΠΡΟΖΟΥ, on both plainly enough appear ; though one of them only presents to our view, before the face of the Parthian king, a complex

(1) We meet, however, with a Greek date on a little brass coin, very ill preserved, in my small collection, which seems to indicate the piece to have been struck by one of the princes of the house of Saffan. That date was undoubtedly formed of the letters ΔΟΦ, so that the first appearance of the medal must be allowed posterior to the dissolution of the Parthian empire, whether we adopt F. Corsini's Parthian Æra, or that followed by Dr. Vaillant. The coiffure of the prince's head is exactly the same with that peculiar to the Saffanian kings. The globe also, above the diadem, and the large tuft of hair here, seemingly adorned with pearls or other precious stones, and forming another kind of globe, are frequently visible on the medals appertaining to those kings. The turrited head, on the reverse, represents the genius of the city where the coin was struck. *Philos. Transact.* Vol. LVI. TAB. XV. N. 4.

character, or monogram, seemingly composed of the Greek letters Ε,Λ, and three or four unknown character's, that have suffered a little from the injuries of time. Such are the coins now described, and the proper objects of my attention here.

With regard to the word, or rather name, ΠΡΟΖΟΥ, I shall not hesitate a moment to read and pronounce it ΠΕΡΟΖΟΥ; instances of the omission of a Greek letter, according to the (2) writers here referred to, having been met with on the Parthian coins. Nay, I find in my small cabinet an inedited Parthian coin, with the following imperfect inscription upon it,
 ΒΑΣ :: :: :: ΒΑΣΙΑ :: :: :: ΔΙ :: :: :: ΕΠΙΦΑΝΤ :: ::
 ΦΙΛΕΛΑΝ :: :: :: for ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝ :: :: to omit others
 that might, with equal facility, be produced. Nor can this be matter of surprize to any one who considers, that Greek words are sometimes very inaccurately expressed on those coins. The unusual curls, on the reverse, may possibly be thought to point at Armenia (3), as the country where these pieces were struck; especially, as the complex character, if it is a monogram formed of the Greek elements Ε,Λ, or ΕΔ, seems to direct us to the city of Elegia in Armenia, where a whole Roman army (4) was cut off by Vologeses II. And this will appear

(2) Edvard. Corsin. *Ad Clariss. Vir. Paul. M. Paciaud. Epist. Romæ, 1757.* Erasm. Frcl. Reg. Vet. Numism. &c. Tab. I.N.X. Viennæ Austricæ, 1753. Vid. etiam *Saggi di Dissertazion. Accademich. &c. di Corton.* Tom. VII. p. 203. In Roma, 1758. Nov. Aet. Erudit. Lips. Mens. August. 1758. p. 436. Lipsiæ, 1758. & Philos. Transf. Vol. LVI. TAB. XV. N. 3.

(3) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. L. Par. I. p. 186.

(4) Jul. Capitolin. in *M. Antonin. Philosoph. Lucian. in Vit. Alexand. Pseudomant.* p. 486, 487.

still more probable, after we have discovered the monarch denominated Perozes, or Peroz, and the reason of that name. To what prince therefore, and on what occasion, the name, or rather surname, Perozes was applied, I am next to inquire.

Vologeses II. having finished his preparations for a war with the Romans, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, soon after that prince's death, made an irruption (5) into the Greater Armenia. This happened, according to Dio, in the year of Rome 915, or of CHRIST 161. Meeting with little or no opposition, he advanced to Elegia, a city of that kingdom, where a Roman army, under the command of Severianus, the prefect of Cappadocia, was at that time posted. This formidable body he immediately attacked, (6) and so intirely defeated it, that scarce a single Roman found means to escape. So complete a victory as this must of course have put Vologeses in possession of the greatest part of Armenia, and particularly of the city of Elegia. After so important a conquest, the Parthian monarch may naturally enough be supposed to have caused the medals I am considering to have been struck, and that in the town of Elegia. And that this was really the case, some will perhaps allow deducible from the monogram presented to our view on one of these coins. Nay, that he derived the name, or surname, Peroz, or Perozes, itself from a successful expedition he undertook against the Romans, we learn from Moses Chorenensis, the Armenian historian. "At which time, says this writer (7), after the death of Titus the Second,

(5) Jul. Capitolin. & Lucian, ubi sup.

(6) Dio, lib. LXXI. p. 802. B.

(7) Mos. Chorenens. *Histor. Armeniac.* lib. II. cap. LXI. p. 181. Lond. 1736.

" king of the Romans, called Antoninus Augustus,
 " Peroz, or Perozes, king of the Persians, (Parthians)
 " made an irruption into the Roman empire; from
 " whence he deduced the name Perozes, which
 " signifies *The Conqueror*, or *The Victor*, having
 " before been denominated Vologesus, according to
 " the Greeks, but by what name he went amongst
 " the Persians I have not yet been able to learn." Which passage seems not only to point at the defeat of Lucius Attidius in (8) Syria, but likewise at the terrible overthrow given the Romans in Armenia, soon after Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus ascended the imperial throne.

I shall only beg leave at present to add, that the (9) Arabic Firûz and the Persic or Armenian Peroz agree intirely in signification, (10) if they may not be considered as absolutely the same word; that a Persian king, named Firûz by the Arabs, (11) is called Perozes (*Περόζης*) by Agathias; that (12) Moses Chorenensis and one, at least, of the medals here described mutually strengthen and support each other; and that I am, with all possible consideration and esteem,

S I R,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

Christ-Church, Oxon.

June 30, 1766.

John Swinton.

(8) Jul. Capitolin. ubi sup.

(9) Al Makîn, Greg. Abu'l Faraj, Ism. Abulfed, aliquie scriptor. Arab. Firûz, (فیروز) is rendered *Felicitas*, *Victoria*, &c. by Golius; and by Meninski *Victoriofus*, *Felix*, *Prospere*. It is a Persic word.

(10) Golius, Meninski, aliquie lexicograph. Arab. & Persic.

(11) Agath. Scholast. *De Imper. & Reb. Gost. Imperat. Justinian.* Lib. IV. p. 137. Parisiis, 1660.

(12) Moses Chorenens. ubi sup.

ERRATUM, in *Philof. Transact.* Vol. LIV.
 Page *139. note, l. 2. for וּ read תַּשְׁ.